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AND AT THE

THE VOICE OF PROVIDENCE

AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 2014

Featured story on page 1:

Labor Day Reflection

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*O St. Joseph, foster father of
Jesus Christ and true spouse of the
Virgin Mary, pray for us and the
suffering and dying of today.*

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Mission:

The divine call places the Servants of Charity
in the heart of the Church, making us share
more deeply in her mission in the world and
especially in her care for the poor. In the
Church, we are witnesses of God's fatherly
love and of the sacred value of each person,
even of the least gifted.

In collaboration with the people of goodwill,
we endeavor to safeguard the least ones so
that we work toward building a better world,
open to Christ and His Gospel.

Labor Day Reflection

By FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

When I was in 1st grade I didn't like school. I'd rather go to the farm and "help" my father. By the time I went to high school, I found out what "helping" my father really meant. I developed a tolerance for school and I hated Adam and Eve. I had heard that it was because of them that I had to go to school and help on the farm.

In catechism classes I learned that as a result of original sin, Adam must earn his bread through the sweat of his brow. But I think that they had to work even before the Fall. The difference is before the Fall they loved to work; after, they hated it.

We all have those days. There are days when I wake up rested. I surprise myself with cleaning my room and finishing that article I have been struggling with all last week. And then there are other days. I lock myself in my office with the monster of my labor and scream at the top of my lungs to be let out.



Work sometimes is a joy; sometimes it is nothing but penance. It's like swimming. Sometimes you do it for fun; sometimes you do it to save your life. St. John Paul II, in his landmark encyclical, *Laborem Exercens*, writes about these two aspects of work:

“While it is true that man eats the bread produced by the work of his hands—and this means not only the daily bread by which his body keeps alive but also the bread of science and progress, civilization and culture—it is also a perennial truth that he eats

this bread by ‘the sweat of his brow, that is to say, not only by personal effort and toil but also in the midst of many tensions, conflicts and crises, which, in relationship with the reality of work, disturb the life of individual societies and also of all humanity.”

When you feel like your work is getting you down, remember that you kneel before Jesus the Carpenter who died nailed to the Wood of the Cross. Human work always has been a way to participate in God's creation and has been a call to transform the world. And work after the Fall will always have the element of suffering. But through Christ's own work of Redemption, that same suffering can be united to Christ's transformation of the world, making of it an offering to the Father. This world and our ability to “fill and subdue it” are a gift from God. Our suffering is something we can offer to God through Christ, who takes the fruit of our labor and makes it an acceptable offering. The creation of the world and man is a gift of God. Then men and women, from shapeless nature have produced all the beauty we see. And we place it before God in the offertory, that He may make it the Bread of Life and our Spiritual Drink. Let's be aware that our work is a gift, a chance to transform this world according to God's design. Our sweat and toil come from our sin, but through Christ they can be transformed into an offering more precious than we could have ever hoped to offer on our own.

So this Labor Day weekend, let's pay special attention to one of the oldest prayers in the Mass, one that comes from a Jewish prayer of blessing at meals that thousands of our older brothers in Faith say to this day: “Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the Bread of Life.” And let's pray for all who work on God's green earth, and all who long to find work or struggle to keep working. Let's be aware as well that it is through our toil that we are called to eternal rest with God.

“Let's be aware that our work is a gift, a chance to transform this world according to God's design. Our sweat and toil come from our sin, but through Christ they can be transformed into an offering more precious than we could have ever hoped to offer on our own.”

Saint Joseph and Saint Francis de Sales

By FR. PAUL OGGIONI, SDC

St. Francis de Sales was born in 1567 in Thorens, France, in the bosom of a noble family. In 1591 he was awarded the degree of doctor of laws and he was ordained a priest two years later.

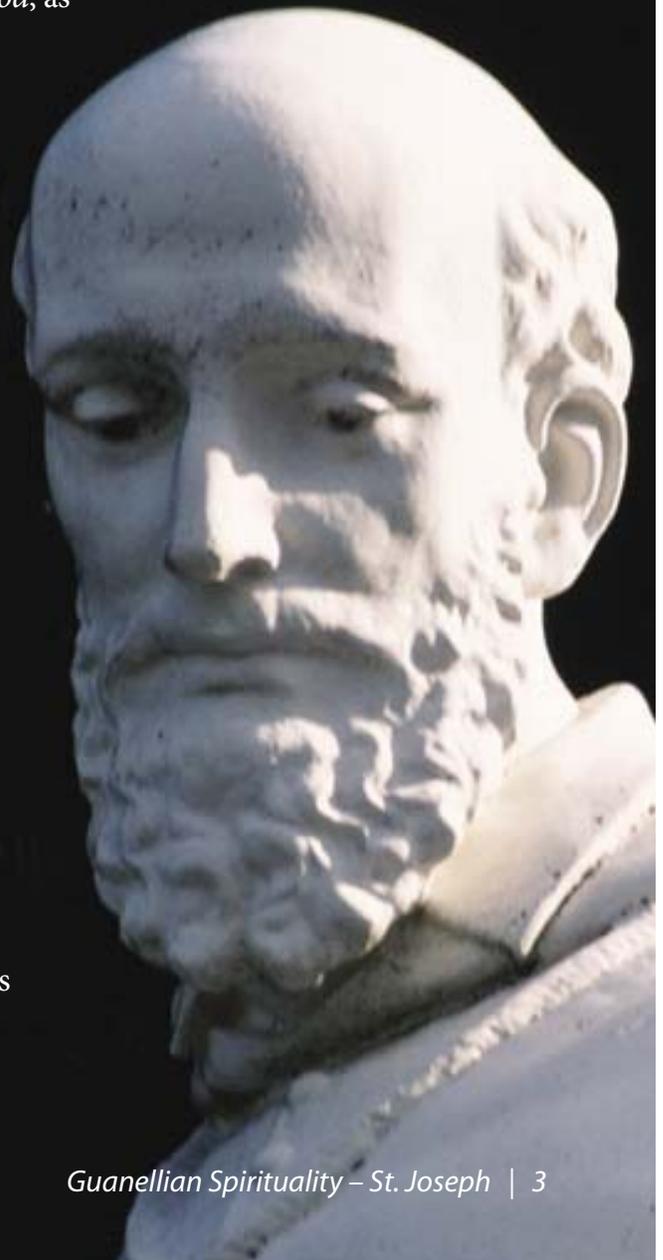
In 1594 he was sent to Chablais, to convert the Calvinists and in 1602 he was appointed bishop of Geneva. In 1610 he helped to found the Order of the Visitation of Our Lady, dedicated to those excluded from joining other orders by physical problems.

His works include the well-known religious classic *Introduction to the Devout Life* and *A Treatise on the Love of God*, as well as numerous letters and sermons.

He died in Lyons in 1622. The autopsy revealed 33 stones in his liver, trophies of the heroic battles he won over his own anger and the injustices done to him, battles that made him a man of strong character, but always kind and gentle.

In 1665 he was canonized and in 1877, Pope Pius IX declared him a Doctor of the Church. In 1922 he was declared patron saint of Catholic writers and journalists. His feast is celebrated on January 24th.

He was a great trainer of consciences and an enlightened spiritual director. He left many written meditations which he dictated to the Sisters of the Visitation, training them in the loving tenderness that was supposed to animate and sustain their love for God in the fulfillment of His will. In some meditations he spoke of the “Serenity of heart, bearing the troubles of this life,” and presented St. Joseph as a model of life.



St. Francis de Sales invites us to fix our attention on God who is always the same yesterday, today and forever. The fact is that we are fickle. Today we appreciate a person and tomorrow we are no longer able to tolerate them. This happens because we let ourselves be dominated by our inclinations, passions and feelings; perturbing God's plan which our reason and faith should help us to understand and accept.



Even the Holy Family had to face many difficulties. Read and ponder the thoughts that flowed from the heart of this saint, “When our Lady brought forth her Son, the angels announced His birth, and the shepherds and the Magi came to adore Him. A little later the angel said to St. Joseph in a dream, ‘take the child and His mother and flee into Egypt, because Herod wishes to put the child to death, and remain there until I tell you.’

What is all this? Might not poor St. Joseph have said, ‘You tell me to go; will there not be time enough to go tomorrow? Where would you tell me to go by night? My preparations are not made; how would you have me carry the child? Will my arms be strong enough to carry Him throughout so long a journey? Or perhaps you mean for His mother to carry Him in her turn? Alas! Do you not see that she is but a young girl, weak and tender? I have neither horse nor money for this journey? And do you not know that the Egyptians are enemies of the Israelites? Who will receive us?’

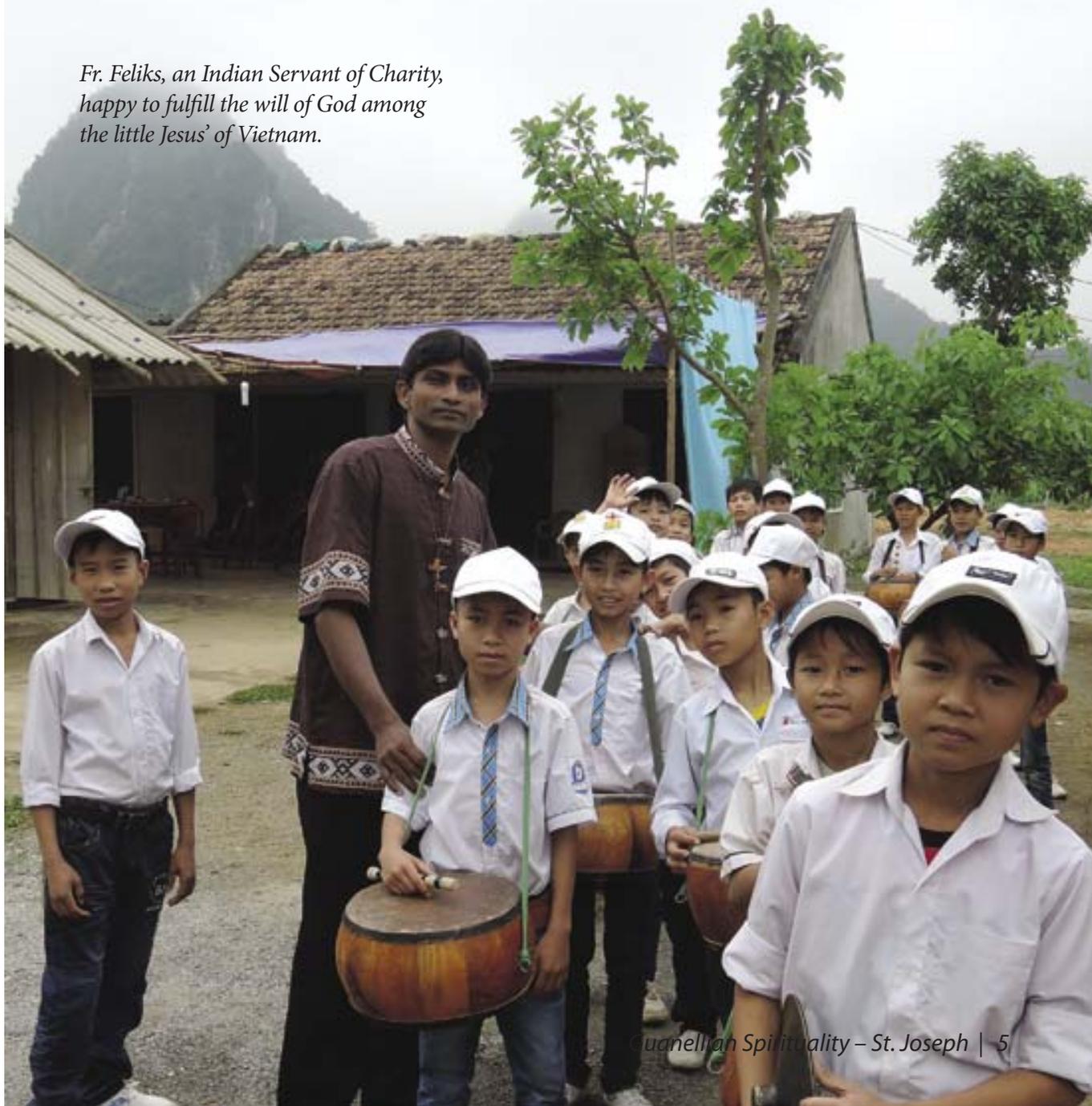
Had we been in St. Joseph's place, would we not have a thousand excuses to keep ourselves from obeying the command? Whereas he did not say a word to excuse himself from doing his duty, but set out at that very moment on his journey, and did all that the angel had commanded him.”

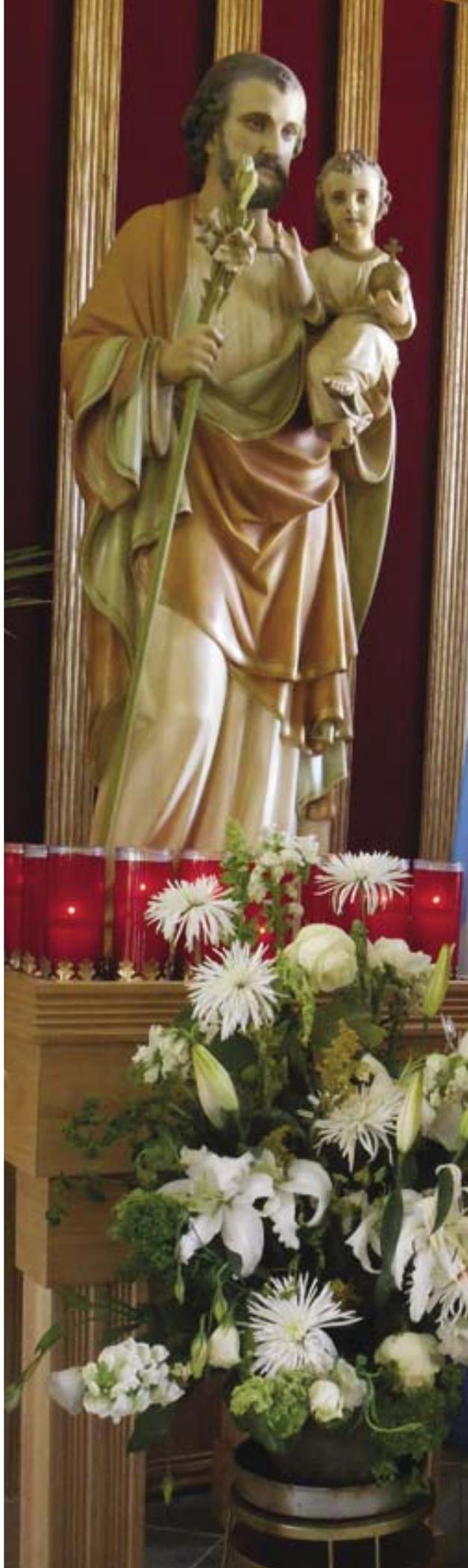
How many times has God sent his angel to announce to us His willingness, asking us to allow His Son to be incarnated and grow in us in a new form, but always true and

real! Jesus said that He himself is present in the smallest and poorest of our brothers and sisters. Perhaps we only possess a little Jesus in us; or we are unable to feel His presence in ourselves or in others because our faith is small. How many little Jesus' live and move around us! Little Jesus' who want to be defended, helped right away, protected from outrages that offend their dignity. However, He wants to grow in and among us so that our lives may become a message of the salvation that God is always merciful through Jesus' love and through the Holy Spirit's power.

St. Francis de Sales tells us again, "Oh, how very wrong we are to let God knock again and again on the door of our hearts before we open it to Him and allow Him to enter in and dwell there! We must consider the great peace and serenity of mind that the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph showed in their constancy amid all the unexpected events that befell them."

*Fr. Feliks, an Indian Servant of Charity,
happy to fulfill the will of God among
the little Jesus' of Vietnam.*





Saint Joseph

Protector of the Suffering and Dying

BY FATHER PAUL OGGIONI, SDC

We were surprised and excited when we received the news from our Roman Center of the Pious Union of St. Joseph that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI asked to become a member of the Arch-Confraternity of Prayer for the Suffering and Dying.

The first member of the Pious Union of St. Joseph, at the time of its birth, was St. Pius X, Giuseppe Sarto. Now we add another pontiff, also with the first name Joseph, Joseph Ratzinger.

May 19, 2014 is a date for commemorating. In a signed letter, Benedict XVI asked to be enrolled in the “Perpetual Mass” by committing himself, as thousands of priests have done, to celebrate a Mass once a year for the dying.

The Pious Union of St. Joseph is a chain of spiritual solidarity, so that at the time of the passage to eternal life, we are supported by St. Joseph, as he was assisted by Jesus and Mary.

The Perpetual Mass for the dying, also born from the Guanellian ministry, was approved and encouraged by Pope Benedict XV in a signed letter on June 15, 1917, during World War I, one month after the apparition of Mary in Fatima.

Our Shrine of St. Joseph is the National Center of the Pious Union of St. Joseph in the United States. It can be compared to a heart that continuously pumps spiritual blood to the hundreds of thousands of people who cross the threshold of eternity each day to see God face to face. All of these brothers and sisters breathe sighs of love or moan in pain; sighs of love for those who were guided by their faith, whatever it is, looking for God who guided them on their way here on earth; moans of pain, for those who have not lived a life of grace or have rejected the teachings of their religious belief or refused the order of nature or whose conscience reproaches the emptiness of their lives. For the latter, despair becomes a tremendous risk.

That's the reason St. Louis Guanella set up this crusade of prayer for the dying by invoking the intercession of St. Joseph. There are hundreds of thousands of faithful who, in their daily lives, in the workplace, in religious houses, hospitals, schools, even prisons, invoke St. Joseph saying: "O St.

Joseph, foster father of Jesus Christ and true spouse of the Virgin Mary, pray for us and for the suffering and dying of this day."

Whenever you say this prayer, it is as if a drop of blood enters into the spirit of those who are dying in order to increase their faith or to bring them back to repentance if they had lost their hope in God, who loves and saves them. St. Joseph knocks at the heart of Jesus, asking Him to open the gate of His mercy toward those who reached the threshold of eternal life.

Here in the United States we are also spreading this devotion to St. Joseph, patron of the sick and the dying. At our National Center we receive numerous requests for prayers and celebrations of

Holy Masses for the purification of the souls in Purgatory. The candles that burn at the request of the devotees, in front of the image of St. Joseph, patron of the Church and the dying, are the visible sign of the many drops of blood which are transfused every day in the veins of the body of the Church and carrying spiritual energy and life to those who suffer and die.

You too can request a candle to be lit before St. Joseph, confident that the prayers that we raise every day in our Shrine will find in St. Joseph a powerful intercessor before God for your intentions in favor of your loved ones; living and deceased.

Light your candle in front of St. Joseph. We will pray for you.



Mailbag

Dear Pious Union of St. Joseph,

I would like to request the Gregorian Mass be celebrated for my mother who died on May 23rd. (Eunice Manton Rutledge). For 13 years I cared for Mom with dementia and for the last 6 months struggled to honor the process as she stopped eating and her body withered. Just before she passed, she received Holy Communion and an Anointing. I had the Divine Mercy Chaplet said and completely turned her over to the care of St. Joseph and the Holy Family. When the nurse removed the oxygen, instead of loss, I was filled with gratitude and thankfulness—I knew my mother was in the presence of God. Since no one knows exactly how it works after death, I believe that if Mom does need assistance, the Gregorian Mass will provide.

Thank you!

Ruth, Hammond, LA

To the Priests of the Pious Union,

First of all, thank you for all you do in the spirit of your Founder for the sake of the dying. I have enclosed my donation as a way of “paying it forward.”

I have accepted a teaching position, grade 6, for the fall at St. Theresa Catholic School in Sugar Land, TX. I must now—and soon—sell my home in Memphis. I have great confidence in St. Joseph’s intercession in this matter. In fact, he has been a favorite saint my entire life!

May God prosper your good works! Gratefully,

Catherine, Memphis, TN

Dear Fr. Paul,

Please pray for these intentions during Holy Mass: in thanksgiving my grandson Joseph returned safely from Afghanistan on February 11, 2014, my daughter Tami got the job she wanted and my son Jeff got a good job after being unemployed for two years. Thank you St. Joseph. I pray for a devout Catholic husband for Tami who will also be a good stepfather to Andrew, Jack and Ethan in the spirit of St. Joseph. Please pray for my daughter Mimi’s intentions, the conversion of Jamie and the protection of my family.

Thank you.

Karen
Sterling Hts., MI

Dear Fr. Paul and Sr. Rosemary,

Thank you for my mother's memorial Mass. She is a saint! I realize a woman, married, who had six sons would make an unusual saint. A saint nonetheless.

Thank you,

Robert

Dear Fr. Paul,

I am requesting membership in the Pious Union. I meant to write sooner for membership because I've been praying The Holy Cloak in Honor of St. Joseph since December. I had ordered the booklet and found it very comforting. There were so many issues going on with my family's health, the time just flew by. Because of the prayers to St. Joseph we have had peace of mind.

One daughter, age 59, had breast cancer; another daughter, age 64, had open heart surgery. My 61 year old son with COPD will be going to Stanford in July for tests and possibly have a lung transplant. He only has a quarter of his lung capacity. And I, being diabetic, had to have one middle toe amputated. So it's been a busy time for us.

Keep us in your prayers. God Bless,

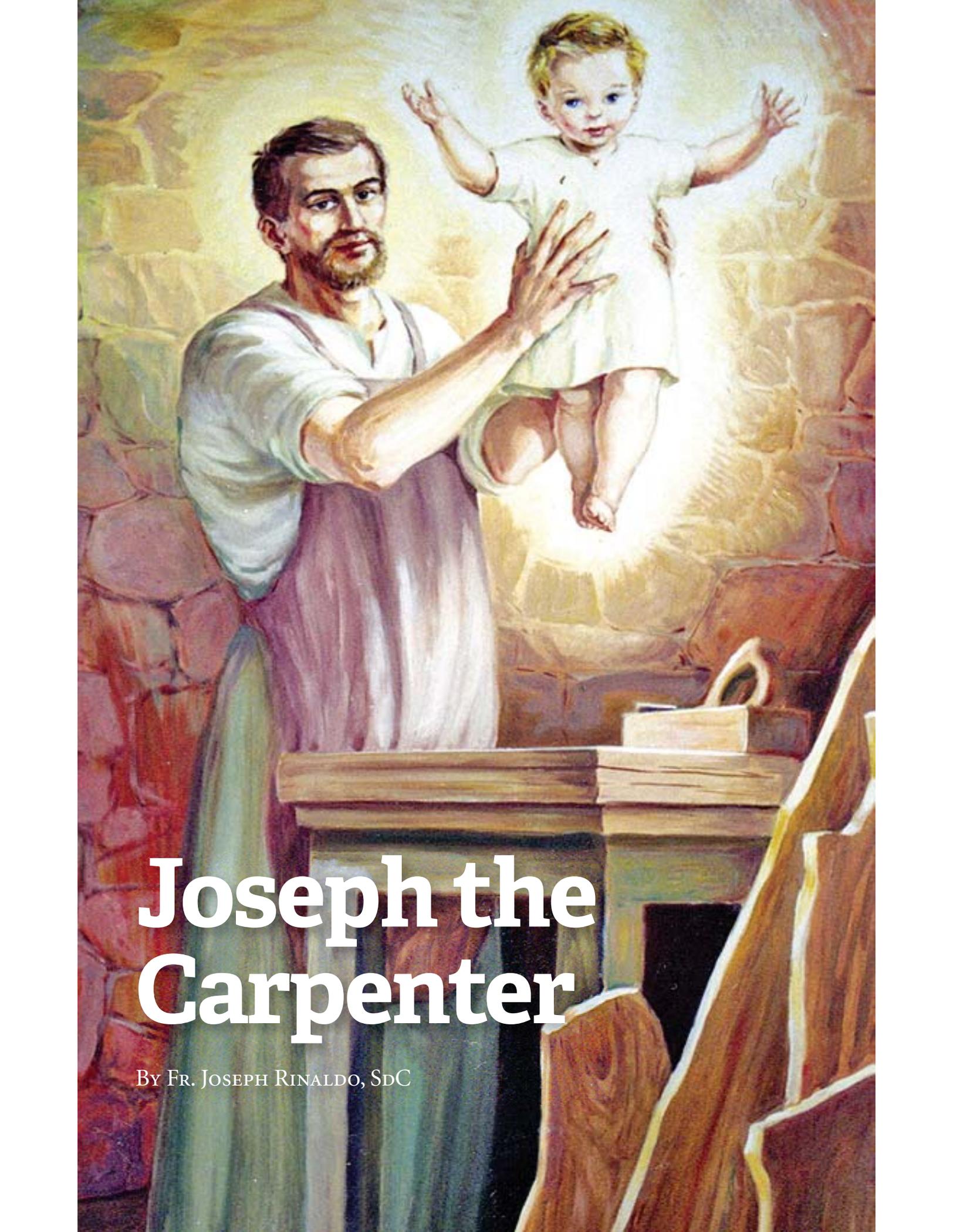
Ida, Denair, CA

Dear Friends and Devotees of Saint Joseph,

God is good! St. Joseph is great! Thank you for your testimony describing the ways St. Joseph has interceded for you, obtaining the graces that you have asked of God in faith. The Holy silent man to whom Jesus has always obeyed now intercedes for all those who seek him, confident that Jesus does not say "no" to the plea of St. Joseph. At the Pious Union of St. Joseph every day we receive many requests for prayers that we present to God through the intercession of St. Joseph. We also receive expressions of gratitude from those who were granted their petitions after their trustful prayer to the Holy Guardian of Jesus.

Be sure that every day we remember and pray for all of you.

Fr. Paul Oggioni

A painting depicting Joseph the Carpenter, a man with a beard and a white shirt, holding the infant Jesus in his arms. Joseph is wearing a purple apron and a green tunic. The infant Jesus is wearing a white tunic and has his arms outstretched. They are in a workshop with stone walls and wooden beams. The lighting is warm and golden, highlighting the figures. The background shows a stone wall and a wooden workbench with various tools and materials.

Joseph the Carpenter

BY FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

The gospel of St. Mark is the first one to call Jesus a carpenter. While visiting Nazareth, after teaching in the synagogue, many sarcastically asked: “Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary? (6,4). The gospel of St. Matthew appears even embarrassed by the title ‘carpenter’ given to Jesus and writes: “Is he not the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother named Mary? (13,56).

Obviously Joseph is a carpenter and known as such. This profession did not exactly confer a great honor, to the point that the Gospel of St. Luke changes even the question: “Isn’t he the son of Joseph?” (Lk 4,22). Despite the effort of some theologians trying to raise the social status of Jesus, by classifying him an artistic master of wood, it is more realistic and in accord with the Gospel that Joseph and Jesus belonged to the last level of the social scale of the time. In the small territory of Galilee, the high classes were composed by a narrow group of royal officials, dignitaries, land owners, big merchants and tax collectors. The lowest classes were crowded with daily laborers, farm workers, shepherds and street vendors. In the abyss of the social scale were the people who became slaves for inability to pay their debts.



Joseph and Jesus belonged to the self-employed group who work hard but had a dignified life. They were the carpenters, small farmers, fishermen and garment makers. Actually Jesus’ family was not really poor in that culture and time. As carpenters they lived a modest life tied to commissions, the housing market and the taxes both ordinary and extraordinary imposed by the religious and civil rulers as needed. Jesus was very familiar with this category of workers. In his teaching, he refers to the field hands, the shepherds, the fishermen, the builders, the tenant farmers. Nazareth, Cana, Nain, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, the towns and villages Jesus visited, were populated by people who worked in these occupations. With the exception of the Temple in Jerusalem, Jesus did not visit the large and wealthy cities. His modesty then becomes a sign of the Incarnation that places God in the simple everyday.

The Christian is invited to work with his hands, as St. Paul did and wrote to the Thessalonians: “You recall, brothers, our toil and drudgery. Working night and day



in order not to burden any of you, we proclaimed to you the Gospel of God.” (1 Thes 2,9). He insisted that “if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat.” (2 Thes 3,10). Work is a commitment carried on with dignity, without the anxiety of accumulation, as Jesus proclaimed in the Discourse on the Mountain: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink...So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat? What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear? All these things the pagans seek.” (Mt 6, 25-32). Jesus proclaimed these words after teaching his disciples how to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

This prayer came from the heart of God and it is addressed to the same God. We all learned this prayer very early in our life. We know it by heart, we got used to it. It does not mean much to us anymore. Routine made us lose its taste, flavor and delight. But it contains the mystery of God and the mystery of our life. In the Our Father, we acknowledge God as our Creator, we recognize Jesus as our Redeemer, we are grateful to the Holy Spirit as our Provider. The Our Father is our relationship with God in a nutshell. To enter in this relationship, this prayer, offered to us by the heart of Jesus, needs to be loved, meditated upon and savored word by word. We can only assume and rejoice that Joseph and Jesus, the carpenters, would have recited these words quite often as they were working the lumber and waiting for the day of the wood of the Cross.

The Assumption of Mary

The Celebration of Motherhood

By FR. SILVIO DE NARD, SDC

I was born, raised and ordained in Italy. An important (almost sacred, I would say) summer day is August 15th. In Italy it is a civil holiday and even the never-tired ants cease working to rest a little bit. Now it is a sacred day because of the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary into heaven. But it was not always so.

The Italian term *Ferragosto* is derived from the Latin expression *Feriae Augusti* (August rest), which is a celebration introduced by the emperor Augustus in the year 18 BC. This was an addition to already ancient Roman festivals which celebrated the harvest and the end of a long period of intense agricultural labor. The ancient *Ferragosto* had the purpose of linking the main August festivities to provide a longer period of rest, called *Augustalia*, which was necessary after the hard labor of the previous weeks.

All work ceased during these pagans festivities. Romans feasted and honored different gods and goddesses, especially those associated with the harvest and the changing of seasons. For Roman women, the *feriae augusti* meant a time to worship the goddesses relevant to their own interests, deities such as Diana, the goddess of childbirth.



Thus, in addition to its status as a public holiday, in time “*Ferragosto*” became associated with “female” matters, that is, fertility, maternity, and children.

Such correlations help to explain how a pagan harvest festival, one already strongly linked to sacred female figures, evolved into a feast day for the Catholic Church’s most revered female figure, the Virgin Mary.

One of the Church’s basic Marian dogmas, the Assumption, refers to the moment Mary was taken up, or “assumed,” directly into heaven body and soul upon her death. Proclaimed as an official dogma by Pope Pius XII in 1950, it was assigned to August

15th on the liturgical calendar and not by coincidence. Though unofficially, honoring Mary on August 15th had been an established practice since the Middle Ages.

That the Catholic Church “baptized” *Ferragosto* as it had done with other pagan festivals seems little disputed. Throughout the whole of Europe, firmly-rooted pagan traditions were absorbed into the Christian world. Many Christian saints, including Mary, came to bear symbolic resemblance to prior religious figures. From her Greek and Roman predecessors, Mary inherited strong associations with fertility, purity, and maternal strength and love. Even today, we Catholics pray to Mary for guidance and care in childbirth just as pagan women sought the aid of their Roman goddess of marriage and childbirth.

At the time of St. Louis Guanella (1842–1915) the liturgical calendar already celebrated the Feast of the Assumption even before its proclamation as a dogma in 1950. In one of his homilies he said, “If Jesus made the heart of human mothers so tender, how much more tender he had to make the heart of Mary His Mother! In departing from the earth, in a most pitiful way on the cross, he said to his mother, ‘A few more minutes and you will be deprived of your son. Behold, I entrust you with John and along with him, all the children of the earth.’ Mary accepted it. Thus she spiritually generated all of them by the anguish of her suffering. She agreed to be the mother of us all and wanted to gather within herself all the cares and sorrows which all mothers can endure toward their children.”

“From her Greek and Roman predecessors, Mary inherited strong associations with fertility, purity, and maternal strength and love.”



Not because she is the Mother of God, did she put on airs, as we would do. Not Mary. As all mothers, she prefers a hidden life, a life spent in the kitchen, in the laundry room, in making beds, in keeping the family together, in praying and suffering in silence... Maybe I am idolizing the figure of mothers but mothers are never “non-entities,” they are mothers, the ones who carried all of us for nine months, no one excluded.

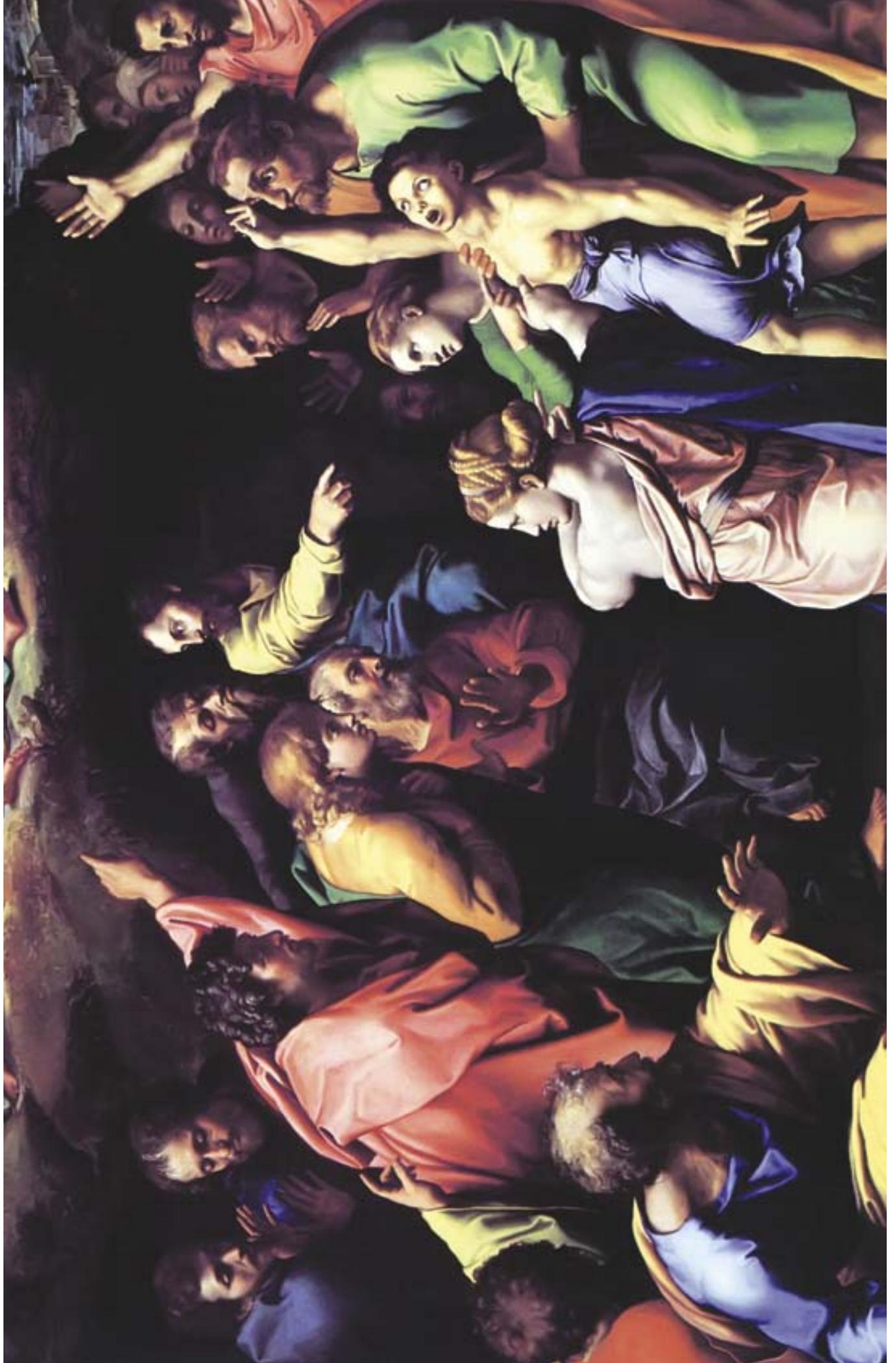
As we keep the Mother of God in great esteem, so we should treasure not only our own mothers but also all mothers because of their particular mission of life. It is a unique gift that, unfortunately, a certain segment of our Western culture disparages.

Even the worst of mothers are still mothers and the Mother of God is particularly close to them.

If Mary loves us with equal love as she loves her Divine Son, then she loves us with intense love. “It is rare,” St. Louis Guanella says, “that a child understands all the love his mother has for him. So it is impossible that a child on earth can fully grasp the love of Mary, our mother.”

Consequently we should never cease rejoicing for the great gift of a Mother whose love for us goes beyond all understanding.





Building a Foundation for Vocations in the U.S.

By FR. SATHEESH CANITON, SDC

There is a lot of noise and distraction that bombards people in modern society; preventing some from finding time to meditate upon their life's vocation.

Young people have electronic devices permanently grasped in their hands to keep up with the latest Tweet, sports update or message from their BFF. How is it possible for them to hear if Christ is calling them to give their lives in service to the church or to another vocation?

In order to capture the attention of youth today, it's almost as if one must appear like Christ in the Transfiguration, "garments shining and exceedingly white as snow," so as to dazzle onlookers and cause them to draw near.

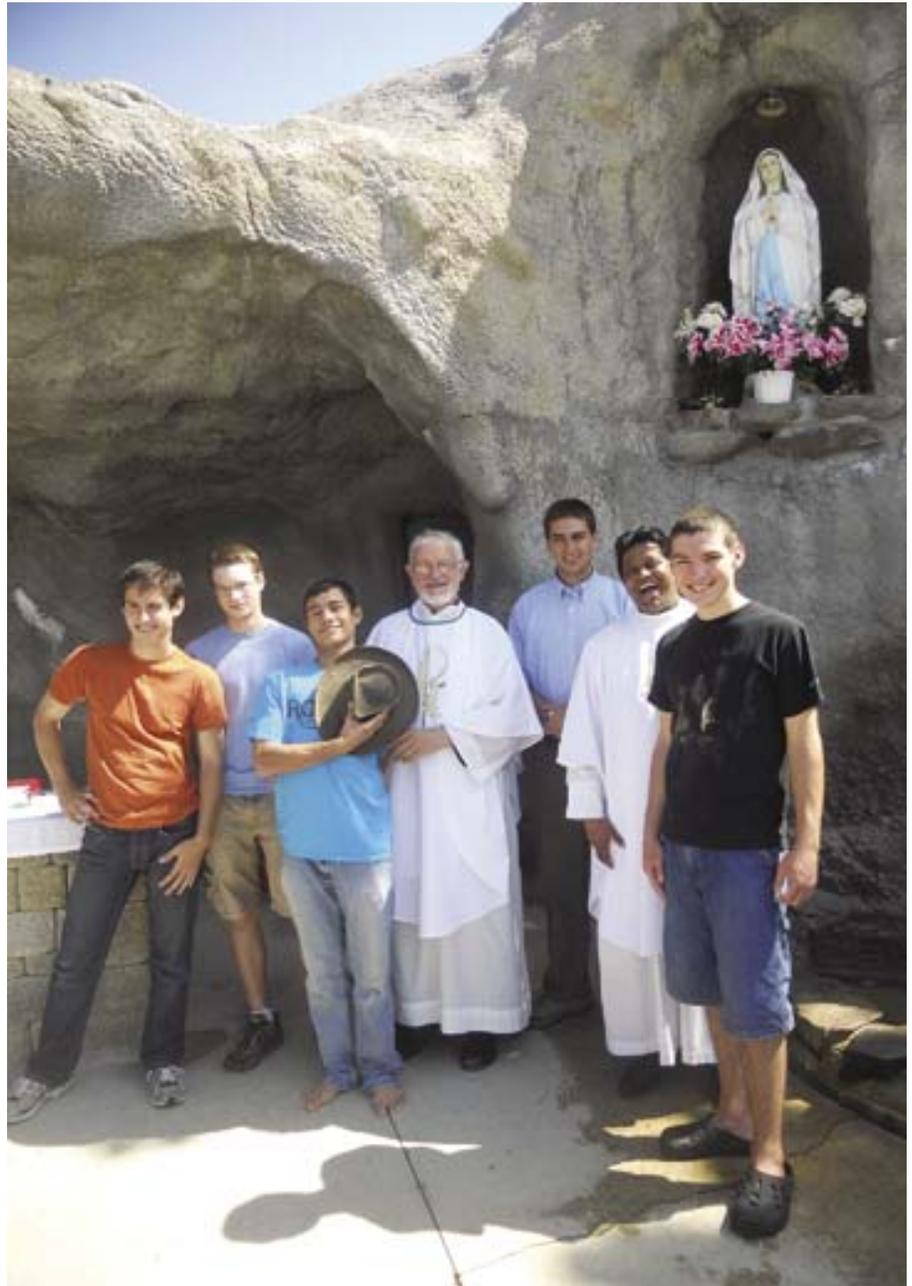


Fr. Satheesh has been working on this since his arrival in the United States back in 2006. At first he worked as an assistant administrator at St. Louis Center and eventually became Vocations Director in 2010. Since then he has been building a foundation for vocations in the United States and working full time in this capacity.

So what does a vocations director do in order to find young men who are interested in the priesthood and how can a vocation be fostered? It is certainly not an easy job, but with his serene countenance, Fr. Satheesh is certainly up to the task.

Some concrete steps that are being taken include visiting parishes as a fill-in priest all over the Diocese; especially in Eaton Rapids, Hillsdale and at Christ the King in Ann Arbor. Being available for Confession times at Father Gabriel Richard High School, Lifeteen events at Christ the King and other conferences where large numbers of Catholics are gathered. He has been named chaplain at Huron Valley Catholic School, developing relationships with boys and their families. There is a monthly Boys Group that meets at St. Louis Center to help sow the seed of vocation as boys are assisted with their spiritual growth. And camps have been held for young men to assist their discernment process.

A new group of young, dynamic Catholics is growing in Michigan called i.d. 916 which meets each month in Ann Arbor; it has become an opportunity for Fr. Satheesh to



meet and develop relationships with faith filled young men and women. Some of the members lead Pine Hills Camp for Boys and Kairos Retreats at the high school level; opening the door for Fr. Satheesh to participate as a confessor and spiritual presence for the attendees.

It has been difficult getting the attention of young people today. It takes patience and diligence and learning to think and communicate like they do; in languages like Twitter, Facebook, texting and other social media platforms; using these channels to communicate the beauty of living a life in service to the Church. So, for Fr. Satheesh, not only has he had to learn about life in American culture, but he has also started to learn the language of youth in the digital era; an era of constant change and flooded with an overabundance of information which is continuously available.

Fr. Satheesh describes himself as a joyful priest; in the words of St. Guanella, “a fiery sword in the holy ministry.” With this joy, he is working to inspire the young men that he meets with his own joyful countenance, “giving them a foretaste of the glory of the heavenly delights to which they may attain,” by their lives here on earth. In this way they can see how Fr. Satheesh “loves his life as a priest” and even possibly consider choosing a similar path for themselves.

To live lives in service of the Church in any vocation, everyone should look toward the Transfigured Christ, the dazzling brightness is truly a vision of heaven, and know that the difficult paths we trod will lead us toward Him. For now, we can surround ourselves with holy priests like Fr. Satheesh to help us along the way.

Quotations regarding the Transfiguration taken from newadvent.org, the Catholic Encyclopedia online.

“To live lives in service of the Church in any vocation, everyone should look toward the Transfigured Christ, the dazzling brightness is truly a vision of heaven, and know that the difficult paths we trod will lead us toward Him.”



What Evelyn Can Teach Us About Dying

FR. DAVID STAWASZ, SDC

I have been asked to comment on the moral issues we face in death and dying. What does the Church actually say on this matter? I'm 60 years old, serve as a priest and nurse, and have witnessed many people dying.

When you consider certain scenarios, you wonder how you might respond when faced with a particular situation. Most of us want to do what's right when helping another person. But it's not a matter of *quantity* of life, (wanting to live no matter what), nor adopting the attitude that says, "I'm better off dead." One isn't trying to play God, but trying to do the right thing. I'd like to share a real life scenario about a person that I was asked to anoint recently.

When I arrived, "Evelyn" was in her late 80's, very pale and clammy, but breathing on her own, (if a bit rapidly and feebly). Her family informed me that she had liver cancer. She was obviously at the end stage. I tried to imagine what her life was like. They continued telling me that within the past year, Evelyn had transferred to a senior citizen center, where she had quickly made friends. She had even visited family members in Arizona a few months past. Upon her return, she was very pleased to hear that many people had genuinely missed her. She requested that her new apartment be painted in the same colors as her former one. She had only recently succumbed to her present state within a matter of days, and she sought all the proper medications and treatments that



would be needed for her. From a moral standpoint, there was nothing that the “Church” states unequivocally that she *had* to do or have done, with the possible exception of the so called “right to die,” formerly known as assisted suicide. I’m sure each of us would be petrified to learn of a terminal diagnosis, but I think that most people would try to formulate a plan. Seeking a treatment to forestall the negative effects of a fatal diagnosis is a given, taking into account what is reasonably affordable; whether medications, treatments, or surgery. Then you must determine your chances with each option, how much time is left, and what can you expect?

No one willingly wants to die, undergo life-threatening situations, or suffer needlessly. But at the same time, I would hope that no one would want to cause another person to die artificially, (O.K., maybe Dr. Kevorkian but he’s already dead)! The Church does not advocate the needless pursuit of any and all means to prolong one’s life, but recommends prudence in evaluating each treatment option. Evelyn lived a good life, but had a terminal illness that eventually claimed her. She was not in abject agony, and she was surrounded with people who cared for her and were willing to keep her company until her time came to meet the Lord. Please understand that each condition has a myriad of details affecting the recommendation of a moral theologian. But begin by taking courage, and trusting in the Lord. Seek, and you will find people who will help you make the right decision. *“May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.”* Amen!

In Honor of Grandparents and the Elderly

By DON GIUSEPPE, SDC

In the United States we will celebrate Grandparents Day on Sunday, September 7th. “Despite the fatigue and pain, the gift of life is too beautiful and precious for us to tire of it,” wrote St. John Paul II (*Letter to the Elderly*, 1999). And Saint Jerome wrote that old age has its advantages, as it increases wisdom and judgment.

The Bible gives us the testimony of older adults who performed great achievements. For instance, Moses was already old when God entrusted him with the mission to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt. This episode foretold the complete liberation from sin that the Father, Creator of everything, would effect for humanity through His Son. Jesus was born by the power of the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary. Both mother and son were recognized by two elderly adults, Simeon and Anna, who also proclaimed them to others. (Lk 2, 29-38).





These examples and many others enable us to appreciate what the Psalmist exclaims: “The just man shall bear fruit even in old age, vigorous and sturdy, declaring how just is the Lord.” (Ps 92,15-16). However, some people, yielding to a mentality that gives priority to immediate utility and productivity, have conceived old age in a negative way, to the point of relegating and forgetting the elderly.

How many grandfathers and grandmothers suffer, in addition to the progressive deterioration of their physical, motor and mental capacities, loneliness, contempt and abandonment? How many suffer poverty, indigence, exploitation, discrimination, mistreatment, different forms of violence, lack of health services and opportunities to continue developing physically, affectively, intellectually, spiritually, socially and productively in terms of work?

Given this reality, it is necessary to recall the divine teaching: “You shall rise up before the age-old head, and honor the face of an old man” (Lv 19, 32). The elderly offer an invaluable contribution to the family and to society. They are depositories of the collective memory. Because of this they are privileged interpreters of the common ideals and values that govern and guide social coexistence.

Moreover, human frailty, which becomes more visible in old age, demonstrates that we all need one another and that we are mutually enriched. The elderly are in need of the younger and the younger need the elderly who communicate to the family the patrimony of humanity and faith that is essential for any society.



The Roman lawyer Cicero wrote:

“The defensive weapons of old age are the putting into practice the virtues cultivated in the course of life.” These “defensive weapons” enable the elderly to face the suffering caused by sickness, loneliness or other situations related to advanced age. The gift of faith, in particular, helps them to discover that they are never alone. God is with them, giving meaning to their life and offering them such a great and definitive hope, which makes the effort of the journey worthwhile.

In fact, life is a pilgrimage to the heavenly homeland. Old age is a stage of the journey. And although it is naturally hard for the elderly to be resigned to the prospect of this stage, faith gives them the certainty that those who believe in Christ “shall never die.” (Jn 11, 25). This hope must strengthen them to continue giving every day the best of themselves to others. They have so much to give to the new generations, with their words, their actions, their example and their prayer!

My paternal grandparents passed away before I was born, but I thoroughly enjoyed my maternal grandparents. I will never forget the rosary in grandma’s hands and grandpa’s pipe. They were always smiling, always encouraging and always happy to see me and my brothers and sister. Grandpa was like God to me. When I grew up, I understood that they were not saints. They were good people, who did their best to help all in need. They survived three horrible wars and did the best to raise their children and teach their grandchildren that God is love. I know I will see them in heaven. I am not sure if they are still hanging on to the rosary and the pipe.

Thank you to the elderly for what they are and for all that they have contributed and continue to contribute to the family and to society! Conscious of this, we will try to build a society that appreciates, respects, includes, promotes and assists the elderly. Let us recognize, be grateful and support those laudable initiatives that give them care and those that enable them to continue cultivating themselves physically, affectively, intellectually, spiritually and socially, to be useful to others, keeping in mind that sentence of Cicero: “All age can be borne if it defends itself, if it preserves its right, if the elderly man is respected among his own up to his last moment.”



Making Charity the Heart of India

BY FR. VISUVASAM, SDC

“The World will be saved only through the spirit of Charity.” – ST. LOUIS GUANELLA

Since arriving in India the Servants of Charity have been making an impact upon the local people. Many children, elderly and handicapped people have been served; many masses have been offered in parishes and substations throughout the region; many young men have been formed in their vocation by the Guanellians and many faithful people have transformed their lives according to this spirit.

Slowly and steadily the number of devotees to the charism of St. Louis Guanella has grown. The confreres serving have taught not only by example, but by offering many opportunities to learn the history of St. Guanella and his congregations. Through the efforts of several hardworking Guanellians; Fr. Visuvasam, Mr. Soosai, President of GLM India, and Ms. Stella, Secretary of GLM India, the Guanellian Lay Movement (GLM) is becoming a strong member of the Guanellian Family. As the Guanellian priests have established their missions in different regions of southern India, they have introduced themselves to cooperators over the past ten years.

In the different communities leadership has emerged to help carry the GLM forward

in its mission to help the priests serve those in need. Bangalore is home to the first GLM organization in India. Thirteen cooperators renewed their formal promises this year. They meet each month for planning and reflection; renewing themselves in



the spirit of the charism. They have been involved in financial and hands on support for the Elderly home, World Differently-Abled Day events, the Oratory and evening tuition programs. Members have gone on mission experiences to Thalavadi, Cuddalore and Chennai and they assist with Vocation camp. They have also begun the Guanellian Youth Movement to inspire young people to walk in the footsteps of the Founder.

In Cuddalore, fifteen faith filled people are preparing to make formal promises; committing themselves to living lives of humility and service. They meet monthly, beginning with Adoration and strengthening their service by reading from “Making Charity the Heart of the World.” They attend to the spiritual needs of each other and come together for recollection and confession. They regularly spend time at the Boys Home assisting with tuitions for children, organize and fundraise for World



Differently-Abled Day in Cuddalore, go on Lenten pilgrimages and give honor to the dearly departed during November. This year twelve members made the ten hour journey to Thalavadi to serve the handicapped who reside there. They not only brought their hands for working, but donations of food and money. They were all so moved by the experience that they plan to return often and bring others with them.



Making Charity the Heart of the World is available through the Guanellian Press, request your copy using the enclosed envelope.

Chennai, Kumbakonam, Andhra Pradesh has recruited a strong group of cooperators who meet quarterly to pray and learn more about the Guanellian mission. The young members are energetic in supporting the local confreres especially Don Guanella Rehabilitation Center and also feeding aged people. They are also very active in recruiting sponsors and planning World Differently-Abled Day events in the Chennai community.

The cooperators in Sivagangai are a fairly young organization. They meet monthly for prayer and are organizing recollections to help foster the Guanellian mission. Some members are helping at Yesuvanam, the day care center, and bringing new people to Anbagam. Through the invitation of politically influential Ministers, cooperators were able to gain some media attention during World Differently-Abled Day events. The GLM in Sivagangai is certainly poised for success.

In addition to the localized GLM groups, Fr. Visuvasam is encouraging the National Coordinating Team of GLM India. Their main objective is to encourage and strengthen the local groups both spiritually and administratively. The next meeting is planned for January 2015. It promises to be a memorable event to grow in the Guanellian charism and learn ways to further the Guanellian mission through fundraising efforts and spiritual recollections. Being a member of the GLM means more than just doing a little fundraising or volunteering a little bit of time; it's more of a way of life that needs constant nurturing to insure longevity.

The members of the Movement, convinced that a deeper knowledge of the Guanellian charism and spirituality is an incentive to human and spiritual advancement, acknowledge that the promotion of a culture of solidarity that takes its inspiration from the Gospel's humanism is of primary importance. They share this educational richness by living and spreading the principles and methods of the Guanellian educational system as broadly as possible. They propose the way of charity first and consistently as evangelization and as a privileged place where they can meet and enter into dialogue with those brothers and sisters that Divine Providence puts on their path, beyond any difference of race, culture or religion. (Basic Document for the Guanellian Mission, 13)

The Changing Image of Benedict XVI

By FR. JOSEPH RINALDO, SDC

Ten years after the election of Benedict XVI, the people of God are starting to understand and love this holy man even more. He had the courage to denounce, even if privately, the cancer of the Church and leave it to fresh energy to tackle the issues.



He identified the problems and offered his ideas for possible solutions. Initially the media portrayed Pope Benedict XVI as God's policeman, the stern protector of the faith. Ten years later, he is seen as a gentle and humble intellectual who has learned to move among the people and a paternal figure who has made himself loved.

He is also seen as a reformer who never lost sight of his objective: to proclaim Christ to the world and bring everyone closer to the Church. He is a Pope who has faced up to tremendous problems such as the sexual abuses. This is the image that emerges from some experts who followed Benedict XVI's pontificate, even if some of them hold that he had difficulty with communication. This Pope was a theologian who, although he became a reformer, never lost sight of his objective to proclaim Christ to the world.

He met with a mountain of problems; suffice it to think of the cases of pederasty and financial reform. In his preaching during the last days before his resignation, it seems that his main objective was to spread the faith and proclaim Christ to the world. This Pope was not the forceful cardinal, but a humble intellectual, very attentive in listening to people, but his position was not duly listened to because it was outside the usual rules of media communication; because he spoke in depth and because he was an intellectual.



While he was perceived by some as being too conservative when he started as Pope, over time his deeds have shown that he was a kind person of quite advanced social thought.

How Benedict XVI dealt with the sexual abuse cases was particularly significant. The Pope faced the deplorable scandal with some people in opposition, but he didn't care so long as 'the cancer' was corrected and reparation made. He faced the scandal on the front line. Benedict XVI acquired a paternal figure that he didn't have before. He made great efforts to bring everyone closer to the Church, not just the traditionalists but also those who proposed innovative movements. Benedict XVI didn't have John Paul II's charisma but he learned to relax somewhat in public. Before he didn't dare touch anyone; later he embraced and cradled babies. He learned to manage himself with the masses.

The perception people had of him has changed, and his trips to several countries accelerated this. In his last trip to Mexico, for example, initially people didn't know him, particularly because he was, so to speak, under the shadow of John Paul II and there was a great question mark about his persona. However, when they met him personally there was a change of attitude. He came into his own when the people were able to see him, so that their perception was different from what the media reported. Benedict XVI was faced with the sexual abuses by clergy, a challenge, a crisis, not certainly one on which he imagined he would build his pontificate. And in the face of this crisis, he was able to give an answer that rose to the circumstances, which perhaps many men inside the Church would not have been able to do; they would have given an instinctive answer: "the world attacks the Church." Instead, this Pope realized that it was an evil within, which had to be extirpated."

The Pious Union Library:

The Holy Cloak of St. Joseph

The Pious Union of St. Joseph has published a booklet of forty pages containing one of the dearest and oldest devotions to St. Joseph: *The Holy Cloak of St. Joseph*.

St. Joseph is the Patron of the Universal Church, the Guardian of Jesus and Mary, the Protector and model of every Christian.

Through this prayer and our perseverance through it, we ask St. Joseph to open his Cloak and provide a shield to us for protection, guidance and spiritual growth.

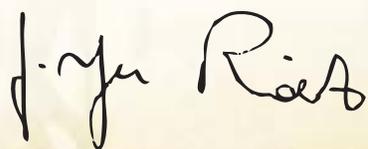
In history, the cloak has been a powerful symbol of belonging like a flag, a uniform or a banner.

When we take refuge under the Holy Cloak of St.

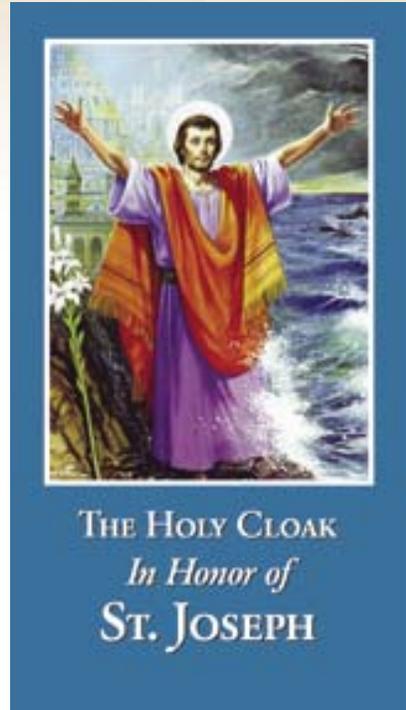
Joseph we become members of his Family with Jesus and Mary. We belong to the Holy Family. We are protected, guided and sheltered from all evil.

This devotion leads us to meditate and understand St. Joseph's virtues and role in the history of salvation for the Church and each one of us.

This devotion is perfect for the month of March dedicated to St. Joseph and anytime we feel the need of special assistance from St. Joseph and want to be members of the Holy Family.



Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC



Is God Calling You to Serve Others?

Among those who are deprived of human and spiritual support, we care for developmentally disabled, abandoned youth, indigent elderly, and the incurably and terminally ill. We are also committed to pastoral and missionary work in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa.

The Servants of Charity Priests and Brothers, Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, Cooperators and hundreds of members of the greater Guanellian family serve over a million brothers and sisters while offering comfort, consolation and support. There is room for many others; those needing help and those who want to help.

Consider joining our mission, making the love of God more and more visible in our world. For more information, contact:

Sacred Heart Church

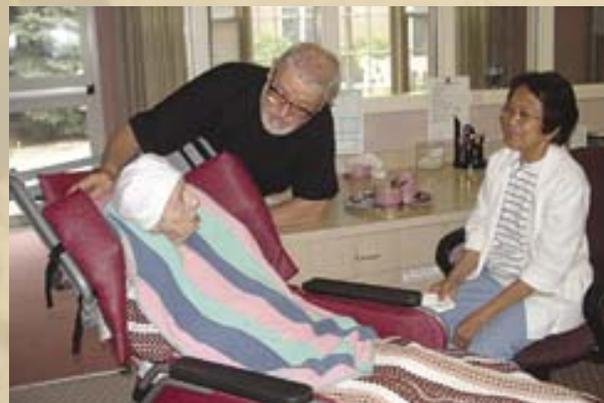
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Prayer for Vocations

Pray, we beg You, O holy Mother of God, that religious vocations to this work of mercy may be multiplied, and that those who are called to help may be eager to respond for the greater glory of God, your honor, and the relief of many who suffer in misery and abandonment. Amen.



Please consider helping one of our seminarians to become a priest or a brother for one dollar a day.



To become a member of the Pious Union of St. Joseph or to extend membership to prayerful friends and relatives, please send names and addresses to 953 E. Michigan Ave., Grass Lake, MI 49240 or email piousunion@pusj.org

Shrine of St. Joseph Sacraments and Hours of Devotion

Mass times: Sun 10:00 a.m. • M, Tu, Th, Fr and Sat 11:30 a.m.

Wed 8:30 a.m. followed by Adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

Benediction: Wed 4:45 p.m. • Divine Mercy Chaplet: Wed 4:30 p.m.

Holy Rosary: Before Mass • **Stations of the Cross:** Friday at 11:00 a.m.

Anointing of the Sick: First Saturday during 11:30 a.m. Mass and when requested

Confession: Before and after Mass, upon request

To receive the Monthly Shrine Bulletin and all special event mailings, please contact the office at 517-522-8017 or send email to piousunion@pusj.org

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